P R A I R I E

Popular and Progressive American and World Architecture, 1880-1930

Incorporating Geo. W. Maher Quarterly

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Other directions

David Adler designed the townhouses at 2700 and 2704 North Lakeview Avenue in Chicago near Lake Michigan (hence...) in 1917, the first for Mrs. Arthur Ryerson, the second for Abram Poole. Poole, a friend from Princeton, introduced Adler to Henry C. Dangler (1881-1917—death from TB), while the three were studying at the Ecole des Beaux-Arts in Paris. Dangler's house by Dangler is at 2708 N. Lakeview, and next door at 2710 is the Ambrose Cramer House by Cramer, an architect and cousin of Dangler, as well as a Adler-Dangler associate. *The photo above, with Ms. Ryerson's house at left, is from The Architectural Forum for April 1922.*

The photo above is the Ryerson House today, cluttered by fire stairs, marred by window closures for the fire stairs and one air conditioner, also traffic signs, a fire hydrant and newspaper boxes, trim painted white rather than cream, and altered with horizontally directed six-pane windows rather than the original vertical six-paners.

People detail from a new book about David Adler. Page 16. Also, more on townhouses back cover.

Prairie on hill above Hellum and Neal's Pendarvis houses.

Pendarvis, preservation & prairie

In 1934, during the Great Depression, Edgar Hellum (1906-2000) went to Mineral Point with Georgia Townsend of Cooksville, Wisconsin, who had heard the U.S. Works Projects Administration was taking apart miners' cottages from the earlier 19th century. There, Hellum met Robert Neal (1906-83), born in Mineral Point and recently back from London where he worked for interior decorator Syrie Maugham. The chance meeting of these gay men resulted in a lifelong business and personal partnership. In 1935, Hellum and Neal bought a two-story stone house (1845) for $100, and began their creation of Pendarvis, a combination of restoration and new construction like that at Williamsburg. Hellum and Neal lived at Pendarvis and had a restaurant. The locals called them "bachelors," the "two gentlemen," "eccentric."

> Historic preservation, as a movement, is a legitimate part of the early 20th century Progressive Movement in the U.S. Early efforts countered landmark destruction endemic since the money-flush late 19th century.

Much more recently came prairie restoration—unrelated to Hellum and Neal but not likely to have happened if they hadn't—on the hill across from Pendarvis. Work began in 1988. A Wisconsin Conservation Crew first burned the prairie in 1989. A 1910 photo serves the Wisconsin Historical Society, owners of Pendarvis since 1971, as the restoration model. Little bluestem and big bluestem grasses now dominate and soften the hillside.

Hellum, left, and Neal. Photo, Mineral Point Public Library.

"Prairie Day." Saturday, July 26, 2003, 1-4. Walking tour of Merry Christmas Mine Hill, named for a lead strike on Christmas Day in 1905, stroll on the prairie.

Sources: Conversation/email, Allen Schroeder, Bob Kubicek, Pendarvis, June 19-20, 2003. Docent scripts, Pendarvis, Wisconsin Historical Society, undated. Interview, Korinne Oberle, Madison, Wisconsin, Spring 2002. "On the Shake Rag," Mark Knipping, Oberle, State Historical Society of Wisconsin, Madison, 1990.

Prairie life

I might report idyllic day after idyllic day, there growing up on the prairie of eastern South Dakota close by Minnesota.

But my raising was complicated. There were perfectly peaceful times. Here is one tied to the landscape. One of my purposes, from the time we studied South Dakota history in elementary school, was finding the state flower designated March 5, 1903. The flower is the pasque (pulsatilla hirsutissima), pale purple and six-petaled, so named because it supposedly blooms on Easter, which is pasque or something like that in French or Italian. More names for the pasque flower are prairie anemone, meadow anemone, wild crocus, May Day flower, and, my favorite, prairiesmoke. Homeopaths use the pasque to treat conditions defined by weepiness and indecision. I wish I'd known that; maybe I, being easily teary and changeable, can still benefit. The rolling countryside started less than two blocks from our bulky brick house, and I would walk into it, stalking the pasque. I didn't find one before we moved away, to Wisconsin, when I was 18. Just weeks ago, in the Allen Garden on the University of Wisconsin campus in Madison, I saw one for the first time, though I'm wondering if it was the same sort wild in Dakota.

DMA

A Small Farmhouse that Can be Enlarged

Being the Seventh and Last of the Series of

Model Farmhouses

By ROBERT C. SPENCER, Jr.

Those which have been published are:

A Cozy Farmhouse for $3500.
A Northern Farmhouse for $3000.
A Southern Farmhouse Costing $3000.
A Brick and Shingle Farmhouse.
A Shingled Farmhouse for $2750.
A Plaster Farmhouse for $2600.

AS THE HOUSE WOULD LOOK WHEN FIRST BUILT

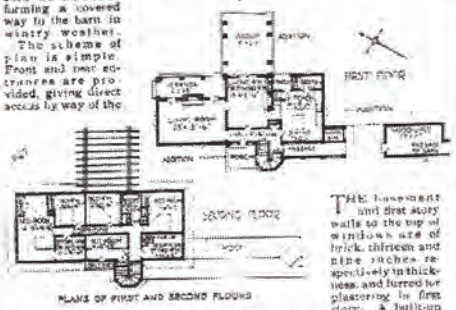
Complete Building Plans

Of this farmhouse have been prepared so that any one can build from them. There are several blue-prints drawn to such a scale that every part of the house is illustrated and explained. These blue-prints are accompanied by printed specifications. A complete set of drawings and specifications, either of this farmhouse or any one of the other six already published in the series, will be mailed, postage free, for five dollars ($5.00). Address The Curtis Publishing Company, Philadelphia.

AS MANY persons are desirous of economizing in their first home building this farmhouse has been designed with that end in view.

When the requirements of a growing family demand expansion the house may be nearly doubled in size, according to a well-organized plan, at little more than half its first cost. With or without the additions, the house is complete. No chances are taken on future needs. Any one building after this plan is sure of a simple, livable and finished-looking house, adapted to almost any section of the country. In the Gulf States and California casement windows, and more of them, should replace the double hung sash, and more verandas would be grateful about the enlarged house. Only in the Northern States would the passage and woodshed be needed, forming a covered way to the barn in wintry weather.

The scheme of plan is simple. Front and rear entrances are provided, giving direct access by way of the single staircase to the second floor and to the cellar. The kitchen—large and completely equipped with hooded range, working pantry, and the best of plumbing—may serve comfortably for years as dining-room, as the living-room adjoining may be used for that purpose. The former use would doubtless be preferable, leaving one room always ready for friends and visitors.



PLANS OF FIRST AND SECOND FLOORS

And the living-room (which becomes the dining-room in the enlarged house) is a large, vine-covered arbor, with wooden beams carried on brick piers, which may be easily built by the owner at any time if he be handy with tools. While the vines are growing a temporary roof or awning may be used. Such an arbor makes an ideal outdoor dining-room and one that is particularly useful during haying or harvest.

BOTH dining and living rooms open directly upon the veranda under the second story of the addition, and each has its wide brick fireplace. The arch in the former may be spanned either by a dressed stone slab or by bricks inclined toward the throat of the fireplace, as shown in the illustration, and supported on a cast-iron lintel. Stone lintels are liable to crack over a hot fire, and iron supports are needed for safety.

In the second story are four good bedrooms, and a bathroom equipped with modern plumbing—tub, lavatory and syphon-jet closet.

The addition provides two more ordinary chambers and one very large bedroom and upstairs sitting-room. One of the original bedrooms may then be converted into a storeroom with a linen-closet, or the smallest bedroom may be used for that purpose.

THE basement floor need not be cemented until the house is enlarged. Somewhere laundry tubs are provided for in the first estimate, and may serve as lavatories in winter time for the men.

For this modest beginning the contractor's estimate is itemized as follows:

Excavating and grading are to be done by owner.

Masonry	$ 315.00
Carpentry, Hardware and Glazing	1220.00
Plumbing and Plumbing	190.00
Plastering	245.00
Painting and Staining	100.00
Furnace, etc.	185.00
Total	$2055.00

For the addition the estimate is itemized as follows:

Masonry	$ 195.00
Carpentry, Hardware and Glazing	340.00
Plastering	95.00
Cement Floor for Cellar of entire house	115.00
Flashing for addition with Gutters and Down-Spouts for entire house	85.00
Painting and Staining	80.00
Extra Furnace Flues, etc.	25.00
Altering Rear Porch and building Carriage Porch and Shed beyond	100.00
Total	$1,140.00

The arbor, if built as shown under contract, would cost about one hundred dollars more.

Systems of water supply and of sewerage outside of the building are not included in the estimates that are given above.

SPEC

Note. The working drawings and specifications cover the several additions as well as the original

THE basement and first story walls to the top of windows are of brick, thirteen and nine inches respectively in thickness, and furred for plastering in first story. A built-up plank girt is carried around the top of the brickwork, spanning all openings, and on this rests an ordinary balloon frame of studding, sheathed with match fencing and covered with quilted sea-grass, over which are nailed rough ten-inch boards and moulded battens stained a deep wood brown with creosote stain. Shingles are better when stained, but are left to weather under this estimate.

The kitchen and dining-room porch with similar boarding and sash between the brick piers is made into an entry and wood room, and where a covered way to the barn is wanted a larger woodshed beyond, a dairy-house or windmill-house may be built with a passage along one side, as is shown in the plans of the enlarged house.

THE DINING-ROOM OPENS ON THE PIAZZA

"A Southern Farmhouse to Cost $3000." The Ladies' Home Journal, January 1901.

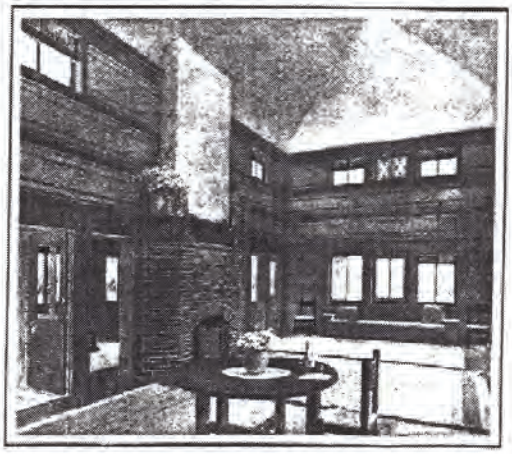
More Spencer farms

Spencer.

After the buildings in the Chicago Architectural Club exhibition catalog (in the first issue of Prairie) and The Brickbuilder article from September 1900 (second issue), Robert C. Spencer Jr. began a series of farmhouses for The Ladies' Home Journal. The series started, with a $3,500 brick farmhouse, in October 1900 under the subtitle "first of a series of good practical farmhouses at moderate cost, each widely different from the other." Spencer wrote, "Breadth, simplicity and comfort are the characteristics of farm life, and I have sought to express them

More Spencer in Ladies' Home Journal

in this house, knowing from personal experience the convenience of the one-story idea." There are commonalities among the seven houses that appeared between October 1900 and June 1901. All the houses provide a space for an office, which is sometimes allotted as a library. Several have rooms for farm workers.



Spencer's southern farmhouse living and dining room. Ladies' Home Journal, January 1901.

Here are some explanations, comments or layout features that interest me:

• *Beginnings*. Each story starts with an embellished letter in an antique style out-of-keeping with Spencer's architecture. The effect is quite Victorian. I've shown one of these here, an "I" from February 1901.

• *Northern farmhouse*, December 1900. The house has a "staircase bay" similar to one in the massive and much-remarked Magnus House (1905, demolished) in Winnetka, Illinois. The shape is a five-sided protrusion from the living-dining room end of the house. Its lower level serves as the entrance to the house. The steps are "wide and easy."

Above, Spencer as landscaper, "trees and shrubbery separate the house yard from the barn yard." Below, Brick and shingle farmhouse entrance hall—"a comfortable room." Both, Ladies' Home Journal, February 1901.

• *Southern farmhouse*, January 1901. The living and dining room is a massive two-story construct. The office is at the front surrounded by a roofed veranda. The bedrooms are all behind. The kitchen is in a separate wing connected by a roofed "passage." He suggests this: "In the kitchen a small water motor actuated by pressure from the windmill tank may be used to pump ammonia brine through coils of pipe in the refrigerator, thus giving cold storage without ice." Clever man. It's likely that others at agricultural colleges were thinking the same way.

• *Brick and shingle farmhouse*, February 1901. For this house, reminiscent of those by Chicago architect Joseph Lyman Silsbee, Spencer provides a kitchen and "working entry... quite large enough to accommodate several bicycles."

• *Shingled farmhouse*, April 1901. The front vista is 80 feet—"open to every breeze." The roof shingles "are left to weather and turn a silvery gray."

• *Plaster farmhouse*, May 1901. The house is big enough to "comfortably shelter an average household, yet warm, durable… and not without evidence in its design of a regard for beauty as well as use."

• *Small farmhouse*, June 1901. This is another farmhouse with a Magnus-like five-sided stair enclosure.

Curtis Publishing, the Philadelphia-based owner of The Ladies' Home Journal, offered plans for the farmhouses for $5 each. These, Curtis explained, were

"drawn to such a scale that every part of the house is thoroughly and carefully illustrated..." How many sold? How many built? Not many, from what I've seen in the rural Midwest.

I wonder if Spencer's interest in farms and farmhouses presaged his move to Stillwater, Oklahoma, in 1928. He taught at the Oklahoma Agricultural & Mechanical College (Oklahoma State University).

Sources. Ladies' Home Journal: "A Good Farmhouse for $3500," October 1900; "A Northern Farmhouse to Cost $3000," December 1900; "A Southern Farmhouse to Cost $3000," January 1901; "A Brick and Shingle Farmhouse," February 1901; "A Shingled Farmhouse for $2700," April 1901; "A Plaster Farmhouse for $2600," May 1901; "A Small Farmhouse that Can be Enlarged," June 1901.

Zona Gale, Bob La Follette & the progressive tradition

by Blanche Murtagh

Hugo Gellert's drawing of Zona Gale illustrated an article in The Nation on July 1, 1925. Gellert (1892-1985) was born in Hungary and came to the U.S. with his family in 1906. The Wolfsonian museum by Miami's south beach is planning an exhibition titled "Hugo Gellert and the American Left" in September 2004.

"In 1913, Zona Gale heard Bob La Follette speak for all those things which she had feebly struggled, she heard him champion labor, agricultural relief, conservation by control of natural resources, the uncovering of fraud in government, she heard him take his stand against war, militarism, conscription measures, monopolies... from that day onward, Zona Gale was a follower of Bob La Follette," so wrote August Derleth in his biography of Zona Gale, called Still Small Voice.

Ninety years later, the Pulitzer Prize winning dramatist will be noted once again, on Saturday, August 16, in Portage, Wisconsin, for her progressive views. Portage, the river laced and historically heralded city where she lived most of her life (1874-1938). A study of her many essays and novels follow her transition from the sentimental and optimistic 38 stories about Friendship Village, an idealized small community with a veiled resemblance to the people and places of Portage, to that of a new social conscience and realism that filled her life until her death. Not only did she support Bob La Follette and the Progressive Movement, but it influenced her later writing as well. Zona Gale had always been a social reformer, clothing her determination and words with the silks of femininity, still filling the expected role of women of her time. A full study of Zona Gale's activities and writings confirm that she was indeed a "woman ahead of her time."

Since 1992, "Friendship Village Celebrates Zona Gale" has been on the third Saturday of August. She was born on August 26, and is buried in Silver Lake Cemetery in Portage. The all day, community wide celebration begins at her final resting place with a welcome from the mayor, music and reading of poetry by the winners of the annual Early Blooming Poets Contest held in the 4th, 5th and 6th grades of Portage area school students.

Among Zona Gale's many social concerns that she shared with La Follette was the fruitlessness and social damage created by the armed conflict of wars. Her pacifism will be noted with a program of poetry and essays called "Peace in Words." Bruce Dethlefsen, of Westfield, published poet, librarian, peace activist, will have gathered together other masters of words who will read from their works of heartfelt concern.

The names of Zona Gale and Portage have been circulated throughout the country, and even beyond, on postal markings since 1992. The Postal Service will once again affix the annual rubber stamping on envelopes and cards brought to the Post Office on August 16, as well as by mail request for 30 days after. This year's design is in recognition of Gale's role in peace seeking.

Her two homes, both of which are on the National Register of Historic Places, will be open for viewing. The home that is in the Society Hill district residential of 137 homes is now the Museum at the Portage. Bordering on the Wisconsin River, about which Gale often wrote about, is her home that is now the property of the Women's Civic League, which will provide music, pie and

Progressive person: Zona Gale... her celebration August 16th

Zona Gale, photographed by Arnold Genthe (1869-1942). From August Derleth's Still Small Voice, the Biography of Zona Gale, 1940.

Zona Gale was born in this house, 603 DeWitt Street, Portage, Wisconsin, August 26, 1874. dma.

ice cream on its tree shaded lawn.

The Zona Gale Center for the Arts Theatre will host the final event of the day. State notables will appear in the "Voices of the Progressive Tradition V." Originating in 2001, "Voices" has appeared in Baraboo, Spring Green, Sauk City and the Senate Parlor of the Capitol in Madison. It was there that a Supreme Court justice, a former Wisconsin governor, editor of a state newspaper, president of the AFL-CIO, listing only a few, who were dressed in the clothing of the early 1900s, read documents and letters that were important in the history of Wisconsin. The figures of Theodore Roosevelt, Zona Gale, Bob La Follette, Belle La Follette, Charles Van Hise, August Derleth, are but a few of those who have been represented by the readers. The advance publicity states that it is a "performance, a remembrance, a conversation, and a celebration... It will be of a time that holds lessons for our time."

A community sized Zona Gale birthday cake will be shared at the end of the performance.

The entire day's programming is without charge.

Gale's house by the Wisconsin River, possibly designed by Claude Bragdon. Margaret Mansfield.

For complete information, call: Portage Area Chamber of Commerce, 800-474-2525; Blanche Murtagh, 608-742-3315.

From "Big Sur, Big Sur," Kevin Killian, Nest, Summer 2003: "A row of pots by Dirk Van Erp, the mysterious Dutch-born coppersmith of the early Arts and Crafts era in the San Francisco Bay area, sits merrily, defying the years. 'If only people knew good Van Erp is,' says Whitney, softly. 'But maybe it's good they don't.'" The story is about the California coast ranch home of partners David Whitney and (the architect) Philip Johnson. Nest remains an amazing publication. For relevancy, see next page.

Buck draws sweetly

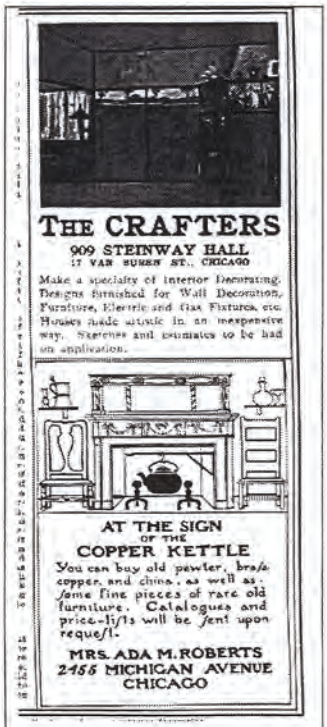
from DMA

Lawrence Buck (1865-1929) is one of a few older architects descended from Norwegians, and that alone could account for the sweetness of his drawings.

Buck and his two colleagues, Elizabeth Eleanor D'Arcy Gaw and Mary Mower who together were The Crafters got shortshrift from H. Allen Brooks in his *The Prairie School, Frank Lloyd Wright and His Midwest Contemporaries*. They're not mentioned at all. They do play, very briefly, in another book, James D. Kornwolf's *M.H. Baillie Scott and the Arts and Crafts Movement, Pioneers of Modern Design*. In a discussion of architects, mostly, and designers resident in Chicago's Steinway Hall, Kornwolf writes: "No doubt, the three less well known figures occupying offices in Room 909, Steinway Hall—Lawrence Buck, D'Arcy Gaw, and Mary Mower—were also known to the group in the loft above, although Wright may not have approved of their operation. Calling themselves 'The Crafters,' their published designs owe everything to the manner of Baillie Scott and to the example of Will Bradley and others, as their design for a country cottage (shown) amply confirms." Frank Lloyd Wright and others, Robert Spencer, Cecil Corwin, Myron Hunt, Henry Webster Tomlinson, brothers Irving and Allen Pond, Walter Burley Griffin, the Italian Adamo Boari, Birch Burdette Long, were variously on the upper floors of 11-story Steinway Hall (b. 1896, Dwight Perkins, 1867-1941, architect), a theater and offices at 17 Van Buren, later renumbered 64 Van Buren, and now demolished.

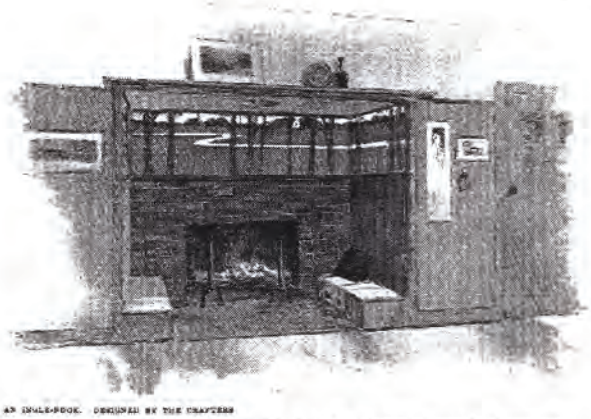
"A country cottage," Lawrence Buck/The Crafters. House Beautiful, April 1905.

The Crafters are obscure. If known at all, they are known for their art and ads in early 20th century issues of House Beautiful magazine. Buck and Gaw, especially Gaw, surface, Mower less often. Pieces done by Gaw with Dirk Van Erp come up at auction; a lamp she signed sold in Lambertville, New Jersey, for $28,750, and, at the same Craftsman Auction (David Rago), a copper vase she signed sold for $8,050. Gaw was on the program for a New York University arts and crafts conference in June. A vase signed by Mary Mower in 1921 was seen at the Michiana Antique Mall.


THE CRAFTERS
909 STEINWAY HALL
17 VAN BUREN ST., CHICAGO
Make a specialty of Interior Decorating. Designs furnished for Wall Decoration, Furniture, Electric and Gas Fixtures, etc. Houses made artistic in an inexpensive way. Sketches and estimates to be had on application.
AT THE SIGN
OF THE
COPPER KETTLE
You can buy old pewter, brass, copper, and china, as well as some fine pieces of rare old furniture. Catalogues and price-lists will be sent upon request.
MRS. ADA M. ROBERTS
2456 MICHIGAN AVENUE
CHICAGO

Pre-Buck ad, House Beautiful, November 1901. The ad below is for colonial pieces.

The one Buck expert says Buck joined The Crafters in Steinway Hall 1902.* Before that, Buck was at 218 LaSalle in the Insurance Exchange (1885, Burnham and Root, demolished) where George W. Maher had his offices. Buck's name is not in The Crafters ad (shown previous page) in House Beautiful in November 1901; no names are. They, presumably Gaw, who was living in Leadville, Colorado, in



House Beautiful, December 1901. Likely Mary Mower's drawing.

for Decorators and Painters.
THE CRAFTERS
LAWRENCE BUCK MARY MOWER
ARTISTIC HOUSES DESIGNED, FURNISHED AND DECORATED
909 STEINWAY HALL CHICAGO, ILL.

Ad, House Beautiful, December 1905. D'Arcy Gaw not listed.

* The expert is Ronald L.M. Ramsay, an associate professor of architecture at North Dakota State University, Fargo. He's working on the SAH North Dakota buildings book.

1900 and on Rush Street in Chicago in 1901, and Mower, first sighted in Chicago in 1902, say interior decorating is their specialty—designs for wall decoration, furniture, electric and gas fixtures and more—"Houses made artistic in an inexpensive way." In an advertisement repeated in several issues of House Beautiful for 1904, Buck is one of The Crafters with Gaw and Mower. All three lived in Chicago. The ad illustration is a drawing of an entrance hall with diamond-paned windows, a Japanese-type screen, a tall vase—an arts and crafts setting; the Crafters doing interior decoration. The copy is the same as in 1901. In April 1905 House Beautiful had a signed Buck drawing in a country house survey. In September 1905, a Buck drawing was on House Beautiful's cover. Later in 1905, in a December advertisement, Lawrence Buck and Mary Mower are The Crafters; D'Arcy Gaw is gone. Sighting the continuing sequences of ads in House Beautiful, we find where Gaw's gone. An ad in the December 1907 issue lists Buck and Mower in Chicago and D'Arcy Gaw in San Jose, California, where she had an artistic and apparently personal relationship with Van Erp. The Crafters ads appear throughout 1908 and into 1909.

THE HOUSE BEAUTIFUL
SEPTEMBER, 1905
The Only Magazine in America Devoted to Simplicity, Economy, and Appropriateness in Home Decoration and Furnishing
TWENTY CENTS A COPY
TWO DOLLARS A YEAR

Buck drawing on cover.

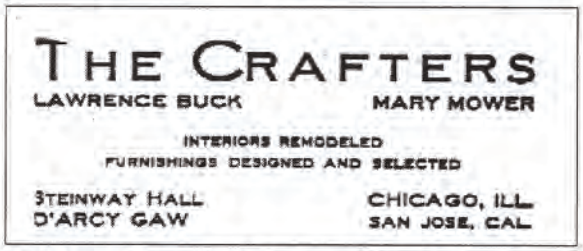
In March 1909, House Beautiful published the Henry Gaw House in San Jose. "Miss Gaw drew the floor plans and Mr. Buck the elevations," reports HB. As such articles usually were, this one is all praise. "So successful has Miss Gaw been in her own house that other builders in California have commissioned her to undertake similar work for them." The redwood-sided house is a side-gabled square with two open porches and one screened.

Gaw House, San Jose, California.

More Crafters ads follow in 1911. In the June 1911 HB, Mower is profiled as interior designer for Buck's Moeng House in Chicago (see last issue). Then in June 1912, Gaw and Mower advertise that they will work together but not as The Crafters. The run ends.

Delineation. Drawing for Buck was a birthright. His Norwegian-born father William Henry Buck (1840-88) was a fine artist. Lawrence, born in New Orleans, studied art with Andres Molinary, as did his father. All during the years he was with The Crafters, Buck drew for other architects...*next page.*

Sources. "An Arts and Crafts House," House Beautiful, March 1909. "Country Houses in General, Some Examples of Recent Building," The House Beautiful, April 1905. Gaw, Bromwell Scrapbook, Denver (CO) Public Library. Allen, W.W. Norton & Company, New York, London, 1976. Kornwolf, The Johns Hopkins Press, Baltimore, London, 1972. Chicago, Lake County directories. Who Was Who in American Art.



Ad, House Beautiful, February 1911. With Gaw joining from California.

Ad, House Beautiful, June 1912. Mower and Gaw announce end of The Crafters—Gaw back in Chicago, Buck no longer with them.

Buck drawings for George W. Maher

Here are three delineations done by Lawrence Buck for George W. Maher.

Buck's signature. L•Buck with a Nike-like swipe beneath.

Buck's delineation of the Kenilworth (IL) Assembly Hall, now Kenilworth Club, 1907.

Buck's drawing for Lackner House, Kenilworth, 1905.

Buck's drawing for Sears House, Oak Park, Illinois, 1905-06, unbuilt.

THE HOUSE BEAUTIFUL

COTTAGE WITH DOUBLE DOOR

Judged by any abstract standard of taste, these humble houses are better than the more pretentious ones of nowadays, since they more perfectly fulfil three necessary requisites of good architecture; namely, that a building shall be in harmony with the surrounding landscape; that its exterior shall be in right relation to its interior; the elevation a

A MANSION WITH A "LOOK-OUT" ON THE ROOF

natural development from the plan, not a falsification or distortion of it; and that it be free from meaningless and meretricious ornament. In certain of our country houses we would do well to imitate, not these cottages themselves, perhaps - that would be affectation - but their simplicity, sincerity, and

Smaller world

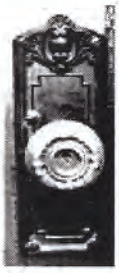
In 1904, Claude Bragdon, architect and designer, wrote in the July issue of House Beautiful about early houses on Nantucket Island. Next to the second page of Bragdon's story (shown above) was an ad for The Crafters, also a company selling colonial pieces and Newcomb art pottery. The latter synthesized, in terms of one sales space, colonial and progressive design long before the 1950s.

PRESERVING A PASADENA GEM

Club raising funds to maintain historic Blinn House

Pasadena Star-News, April 27, 2003.

Maher places



Woodson motifs

Staring has resolved the motifs at the Woodson House (1913-14) in Wausau, Wisconsin. Mostly: the cartouche, as on the escutcheon at left, and guttae. Besides, Maher used arches and a few poppies. More next two pages.

Relatively

Elisabeth Kubler-Ross (1926-). She, the psychiatrist and writer on death, is the mother of an owner of the Jones House (1904) in Wausau. We found her in a May New York Times story on art and corpses.

New

John Hedges is director for the Pleasant Home Foundation in Oak Park, Illinois.

The Architect

by Kathleen Ann Cummings

His early work in Chicago and Kenilworth brought (George W.) Maher to the forefront of residential design. The commission from John Farson for Pleasant Home initiated a new period in his work. After 1900 came a series of grand houses set on large estates often decorated by the Midwest's finest artists and craftsmen. Some of these have been demolished: the Arthur B. Leach House, South Orange, New Jersey (1899) for Farson's partner; the James Patten House, Evanston, Illinois (1901); the Harry Rubens House, Glencoe, Illinois (1903); and Rockledge, the summer house for Ernest and Grace Watkins King in Homer, Minnesota (1911). Pleasant Home and the Frederick Gates House in Montclair, New Jersey (1902) are the only surviving examples on this scale. In each of these estates, Maher used his personal design philosophy which he called motif rhythm theory. The motifs or patterns that Maher repeated in his decoration were luxuriant flowers such as the thistle, the poppy, and the lily that he combined with geometric shapes: circles, squares and stars. Maher's collaborative work with artists like Louis Millet, Willy Lau, Giannini and Hilgart, and the Tiffany Studios in making stained glass, mosaics, textiles, and furniture for these houses produced some of the most highly crafted examples of arts and crafts design in America. Many of these objects now are in museum collections.

George W. Maher

The Architect is excerpted from *Pleasant Home 1897, a History of the John Farson House, George Washington Maher, Architect.*

Order the book from the Pleasant Home shop, 217 Home Avenue, Oak Park IL 60302; $20 including shipping, payable to Pleasant Home.

After 1900 Maher began to explore stucco as a building material. Modest suburban houses built before 1910, including the Corbin House, the Lackner House, and the Ely House in Kenilworth; the Erwin House in Oak Park; the Schultz House in Winnetka; and the Blinn House in Pasadena, show how Maher treated the material sculpturally, often using battered walls and piers at the entrances and swelling forms for balconies and porches. Often trimmed with stained wood, these houses fit comfortably into

Above, entrance hall glass with abstracted cartouche. This glass caused the mystery; the arches are the top-bottom curls of the cartouche set sideway and flattened—also suggesting the paired arches on the front rail for the terrace outside.

The sunporch Maher added to the Yawkey House shows through the door in the small photo.

Woodson House motifs

Mystery solved: a motif for the Woodson House (1913-14) in Wausau, Wisconsin, is the cartouche. Which means Maher's motif-rhythm reigns after all. The motifs, Maher's way of integrating design, are all at the entrance to the house, beginning with urns, moving into the entrance hall and up the stairs.

Right, cartouche carved in limestone on the entrance columns; guttae at bottom.

Below, Woodson House heavily landscaped in historic photo.

Right, cartouche in window for entrance hall closet. No longer in house, but in Wausau.

the wooded suburbs surrounding Chicago. Into these landscapes Maher placed pergolas to connect houses with their gardens.

Landscape designer Jens Jensen drew plans for the grounds surrounding several Maher houses and one of Jensen's earliest residential projects was for the Harry Rubens estate. While plans by Jensen exist for many other Maher projects such as Pleasant Home, the Mosser House, and the Kenilworth Assembly Hall, the character of these landscapes and the extent to which they were executed is only beginning to be studied. Maher took credit for the design of the early gardens at Pleasant Home and later he collaborated with another eminent Prairie style landscape designer, Ossian Cole Simonds, in laying out of the town of Kincaid, Illinois (1914).

While Maher is known for his residences, his work included buildings of all types, ranging from the water tower in Fresno, California (1893) to the Cliffs Shaft Mine Headframes in Ishpeming, Michigan (1919). For Northwestern University he designed the Swift Hall of Engineering (1907), a campus plan (1907), and the now demolished Patten Gymnasium (1908). The commercial buildings in Winona, Minnesota are important Prairie School works. In 1911-12 Maher designed the administration for the J.R. Watkins Medical Company as he had underway Rocklege, the house for Ernest and Grace Watkins King. Maher's final Winona commission was the Winona National and Savings Bank, opened in 1916 after a long period of design and construction. Maher claimed that his revised plan represented a new and American idea in banking.

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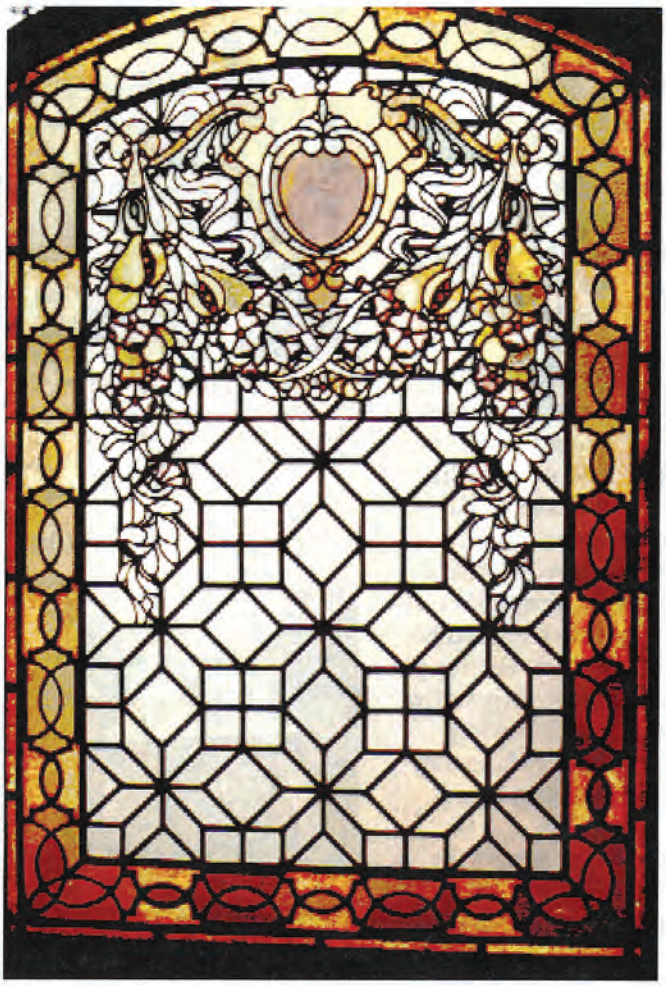

Left, house's most elaborate window, formerly at stair landing, removed years ago and still in Wausau. Below, cartouche carved in walnut on stair railing, and small photo showing window's former space as well as stair railing.

Photos, Marathon County Historical Society, dma.

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G.D. Jones Sells Dream House

by Mary Jane Uecker Hettinga

When Evelyn A. Jones married G.D. Jones in 1887, she did not have to change her last name. They were very distant cousins. In the course of their marriage, they had four daughters: Orpha Edna, Phoebe Evelyn, Ellen Margaret and Hester Mildred.

When we bought the house in the 1960s, Orpha already had died. However, when I found out the other three daughters were living, I tracked down their addresses. We carried on a wonderful correspondence for more than 15 years.

The Jones family built their dream house at 915 Grant Street in 1904. One of the girls wrote that her parents selected George Washington Maher, the Prairie School architect from Chicago, because they had been very impressed by a whole Chicago suburb that Maher had designed in Kenilworth, Illinois.

When we bought the house, I knew little about Maher or his style of architecture. If people asked me the style, I would jokingly reply that I called it "Chicago mausoleum." For some unknown reason, I knew it was connected to Chicago.

Before the Jones house could be built at the crest of the hill on Grant Street, three houses had to be removed. One house was moved to 915 McClellan Street; another was moved to 715 Gray Place; and the third I heard went to Schofield.

It took two years to build the huge stucco structure and when completed it was painted henna red. Because there were no mature trees on the hill back then, you could see the house from all over town.

Inside the house, Maher used the water lily for his "motif-rhythm" in the leaded glass windows, and art glass fixtures. A water lily mosaic even was set into the brick living room fireplace. My correspondence with the daughters proved to be invaluable, as all of

these details had been removed by the time we bought the house. They even sent me photos.

The family had a favorite place in the house—the large picture window (now a bay) on the west side of the house. The family would hurry home and gather there each night to watch the sunset. It was the highlight of their day. Another spot the father loved was his library, with the Circassian walnut bookcases. Jones loved wood as he said it symbolized Wisconsin. He chose many different woods for his house.

The girls all wrote to me about how wonderful it was to grow up in this beautiful house. They spoke of how strict their father was, but they also admitted he had a soft spot. They were so thrilled when he brought home a Shetland pony with a wicker cart. Originally, this pony and cart had belonged to Leigh Yawkey Woodson. He also had skis made for the girls so they could ski down the front lawn. Our children loved sledding down it.

This same front lawn was used as the setting for Phoebe's wedding in August 1921. And yes, of course, they scheduled it at sunset. All of the bridesmaids wore gowns to coordinate with the sunset—flame, violet, jade and orchid. Two hundred guests filled the house for a reception and danced until midnight to a string orchestra.

There was a note of sadness in their letters when they wrote of having to sell the house. Their father was not able to keep the house because his land business dropped off drastically and a large loan he had was suddenly called. To satisfy the payee, he had to sell the house in 1921. Jones, in poor health at the time, died three years later.

Mrs. Jones moved to Vermont to live with daughter Phoebe. When she died some 20 years later, the daughters held her funeral services at the YWCA in Wausau. She had been very active and was one of the founders.

Hester and Ellen went to work in Philadelphia for Curtis Publishing. Hester eventually moved to Santa Fe, N.M., because of a mild case of tuberculosis. She became director of the Santa Fe Historical Society in the Old Palace of the Governors. She died in 1988. I thought of her when I visited that museum this month—wishing she was still there so we could talk about "our house."

310 CHURCH, EVANSTON This Evanston landmark designed by George W. Maher. Features large "Chicago-style" windows & looks over a small park directly at Lake Michigan. Spacious rms. Income producing coach house. 6 bed/4.5 bath. $1,695,000 #XNG7
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Sheridan House, 1910. Ad, Wilmette Life, May 2003.

For sale in Wausau, Wisconsin. The Gilbert House (1894), one of the best-kept of the older Maher houses is for sale for $295,000. The house has no additions and its original carriage house. Brenda McGrath, ReMax, 800-828-0818. Virtual tour at www.remax-wausau-wi.com.

Maher calendar

• *Continuing*. Tours, Yawkey House Museum. Classical-style mansion (1900-01) designed by Milwaukee architects Henry J. Van Ryn and Gerrit de Gelleke, remodeled in 1907-08 by George Maher. Built-ins, oak forest mural in den, oak-motif art glass window, likely by Tiffany Studios, and lantern-shape lights. First owners: Cyrus and Alice (Richardson) Yawkey, parents of Leigh Yawkey Woodson, whose Maher-designed house (1913-14) is across the street and is headquarters and library for the Marathon County Historical Society, 410 McIndoe Street, Wausau. Exhibition: "Off to Work We Go: Local Workers Tell Their Stories, through May 2004. 715-842-5750.

• *Summer 2003*. "Pleasant Birdhome," an exhibit throughout Oak Park, Illinois, of decorated or designed birdhouses. Information, Pleasant Home Foundation, 708-383-2654.

• *September 27, 2003*. "Museum History Day" for the Marathon County Historical Society, whose Wausau homes are two by Maher: the Yawkey House and the Woodson House. Day will include antique appraisals, paper and clothing preservation classes.

More Philip Maher coming

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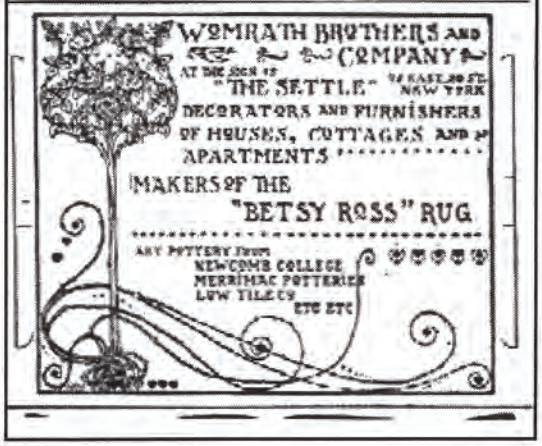
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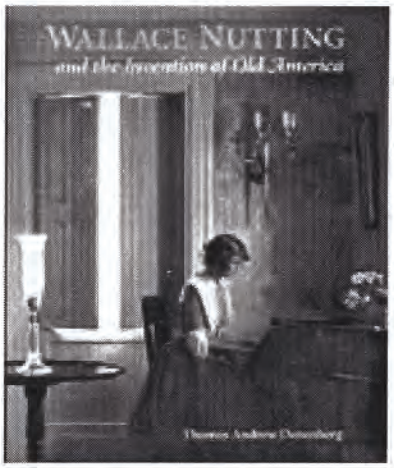
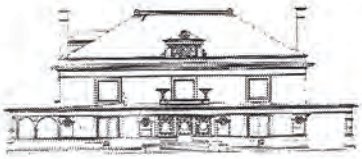
Colony Part 1: aura 1904

another direction

Nutting.

About 1904, an interest in the American colonial style which had been inflating since the 1880s came to something of a head. The unornamented, spare colonial style is a true indigenous American style. Into the 20th century, up to the 1950s and 60s, modernism and revivalism coexisted. At mid-century the two merged in popular design. For evidence, look at the 60s movies on Turner Classic Movies, or look through your House Beautifuls from the 60s.





Farson House, "Pleasant Home." The Brickbuilder, September 1903.

In 1897, The Inland Architect and News Record magazine announced the Farson House in Oak Park, Illinois, by George W. Maher, a Chicago architect, as a "handsome colonial residence." The Economist magazine simply called the Farson House, a "beautiful residence." Today the Farson House is considered a mix of Prairie, arts and crafts and classical styles. Maher's more defined Prairie/arts and crafts-mix houses continued to have colonial influences, a main one being round balusters set in otherwise squared staircases. Robert Seyfarth (1878-1950), a Maher draftsman from 1898 and from 1909 architect on his own, must have absorbed Maher's terminology. Gone from his master and after a few years of imitating Maher, Seyfarth chose the colonial style and became a Chicago North Shore (of Lake Michigan) suburban favorite.

1904: Nutting

In 1904, the Congregational minister Wallace Nutting (1861-1941) had a nervous breakdown, and more or less left the service of higher beings. "High-strung and sickly, Nutting stepped down from the pulpit of the Plymouth Congregational Church in Providence, Rhode Island, in 1904 and looked to his hobbies—principally photography—for relief," writes Thomas Denenberg in *Wallace Nutting and the Invention of Old America* (published 2003, Yale University Press with the Wadsworth Atheneum Museum of Art). Such distress was common enough among the classes, mainly middle and upper, in the early 20th century. Neurasthenia was its name, a gathering of extreme fatigue, insomnia, depression, headache, dyspepsia and more vague symptoms. George Maher suffered the same.

Nutting, a cultural synthesizer like Martha Stewart and Thomas Kinkade (as Denenberg notes), sold romantic hand-colored photographs of early America and furniture, published books about colonial style, owned house museums in New England, lectured—did all. In his *Furniture of the Pilgrim Century of 1921*, Nutting does limited narrative. After a quick

introduction, he goes right away to an architectural chest owned by G.H. Buek of East Hampton, Long Island, New York, and many more pages of early American furniture. Some of his "trademark" retro photos are in the book—see p. 485. At the end of the 1920s, Nutting brought out *Furniture Treasury*, his compendium of 5,000 examples of furniture and utensils, "humbly presented," as he says in his "Explanatory."

As evidenced by offerings on eBay and on-line fan and collector clubs, Nutting hasn't been away, but now he's more back with recent references from the Keno brothers, an exhibition at the Wadsworth Atheneum Museum of Art, and the new book. About *Furniture Treasury*, Leigh Keno says: "Although the book contains little text, and a fair number of the objects pictured have since been proven inauthentic or misattributed, it remains a wonderful visual source." His essence in a few words: Leslie, "Nutting was all about one-stop shopping," and Leigh, "He was the P.T. Barnum of the American decorative arts world."

1904: Bragdon in 'Sconset

In 1904, the Ohio-born and New York (state)-raised architect Claude Bragdon (1866-1946) published "Old Houses at 'Sconset" in the House Beautiful for July. The photos show modest houses in Siasconset on New York's Nantucket Island. He sums them up:

> Judged by any abstract standard of taste, these humble houses are better than the more pretentious ones of nowadays, since they more perfectly fulfill three necessary requisites of good architecture; namely, that a building shall be in harmony with the surrounding landscape; that its exterior shall be in right relation to its interior; that its exterior shall be in right relation to the interior; the elevation a natural development from the plan, not a falsification or distortion of it; and that it be free from meaningless and meretricious ornament.

Landscape, form, decoration: Sounds like a reduction of several of George Maher's articles without Maher's wordiness, or more like Frank Lloyd Wright. Bragdon later went astray, designing a garden for the Rochester (NY) estate of George Eastman. Eastman's house was Georgian and the inspiration for Maher's Dryden House (1916) in Evanston, Illinois.

Claude Bragdon. More Lives Than One.

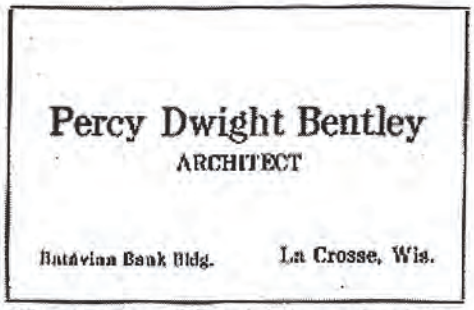
Houses on Shell Street, Siasconset. House Beautiful, July 1904.

Groundwork. The bases for interest in colonialism most often mentioned, without dispute, are the Centennial Exposition of 1876 in Philadephia, and a New England trip taken in 1877 by architects McKim, Mead, White and Bigelow for on-site study of ancient North American and U.S. houses.

To Seyfarth. These few words are here to make way for Robert Seyfarth and his colonial houses. More in future issues.

Sources: "Captain America," Leslie and Leigh Keno, House Beautiful, June 2003. Furniture of the Pilgrim Century, 1620-1720, Including Colonial Utensils and Hardware, Wallace Nutting, Marshall Jones Company, Boston, 1921. Farson House, The Economist, November 6, 1897. Furniture Treasury, 3 volumes, Nutting, Old America Company, Framingham, Massachusetts; University Press, Cambridge, Massachusetts, Vol. 1, 1928; Vol. 3, 1933. Furniture Treasury, Nutting, MacMillan Company, New York, 6th printing, 1966. More Lives than One, Claude Bragdon, Knopf, New York, 1938. "Robert E. Seyfarth, Architect," Stuart E. Cohen, CAC Journal, 2000.

Robert Seyfarth's Stewart House, c. 1913. Highland Park, Illinois.



Advertisement, Pictorial Souvenir of the Police Department of La Crosse, Wisconsin, 1912.

Curious Bentley

Percy Dwight Bentley was born in La Crosse, Wisconsin, in 1885 and died in Eugene, Oregon, in 1968. Until H. Allen Brooks' article about Bentley in the Prairie School Review in 1972 and his The Prairie School in the mid-70s, Bentley was a footnote. With Brooks as base, we've been looking at Bentley's life again, and will report in future issues. For now, he was the son of Emmaline and Edwin Bentley. His father was president of the Batavian National Bank. From 1904-06, Bentley studied, now and then, at Ohio Wesleyan University, Delaware, Ohio. From 1906-10, he studied, again now and then, at the Armour Institute of Technology (now Illinois Institute of Technology) in Chicago. Constantly back and forth to La Crosse, he graduated from neither. Bentley absorbed, however, a bigger-than-La Crosse culture and new architecture. Settled in his hometown, he opened an office in the Batavian Bank building, a design of Solon Beman, a Chicago architect.

Sources: "Architect P.D. Bentley Dies at 83," La Crosse Tribune, February 8, 1968. Death notices, Eugene Register-Guard, February 2, 1968. Information, La Crosse Public Library, Ohio Wesleyan and Illinois Institute of Technology archives.

Batavian Bank (c. 1887), La Crosse, Wisconsin, site of Bentley's first office. dma

Bentley for Bartls

With a Bartl as client, Percy Dwight Bentley had as grounded, substantial and traditional a La Crosse (Wisconsin) family as he could find, or perhaps as his banker father could help him find. The elder Bartl, Franz Bartl, father of Bentley's client Edward Bartl, was born in Bohemia, arrived in the U.S. in 1868, and lived in Ohio and Menasha, Wisconsin, before moving to La Crosse as a brewery foreman, then to Winona, Minnesota, and the Peter Bub brewery, and in 1884 back to La Crosse where he purchased the Eagle brewery and renamed it the Franz Bartl Brewing Co. Franz and Mary Bartl had

For sale, a Midwest treasure

Bentley House In Tomah, Wisconsin

Definitive 1912 Prairie-style design by Percy Dwight Bentley. Open floor plan. 3 fireplaces. 2 bathrooms. 4 bedrooms. 3-car garage. Art glass windows. Basement with full-size windows, paneled and carpeted for office and exercise room. Distinctive exterior brick. 1977 addition, family room and garage, by Taliesin-trained architect Keith Kennedy. 2,600 total square feet. Across from a city park.

Historic view of house.

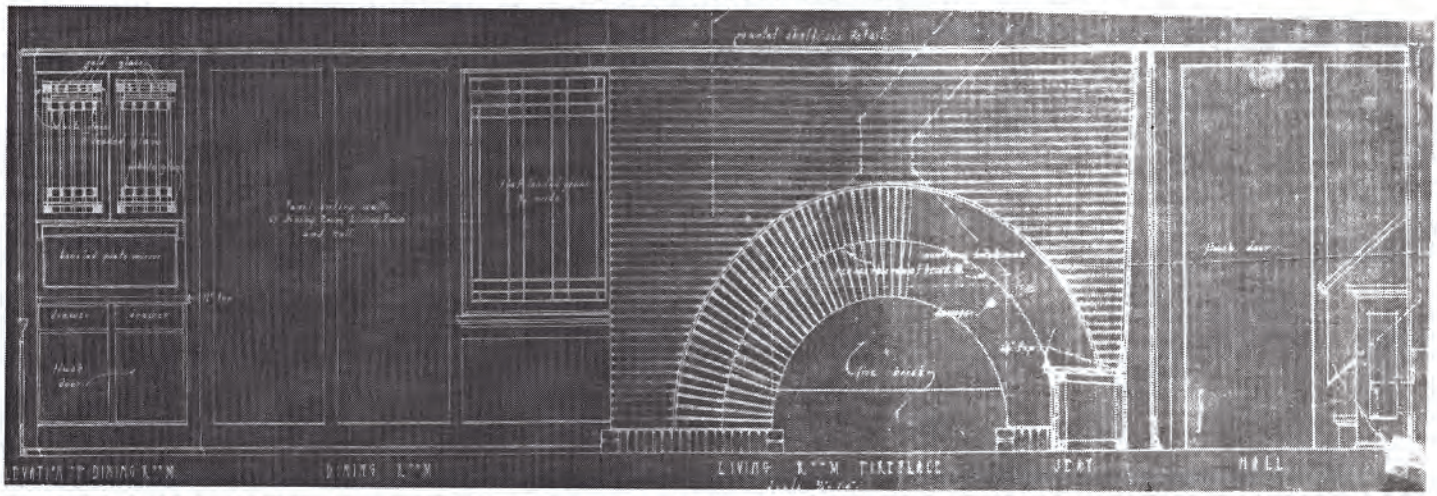
More information Art Hammond 608-372-4961.

Bentley's Bartl House in La Crosse

Bartl House, recent photo. Half-timbered Hulberg House (1912-13) next door.

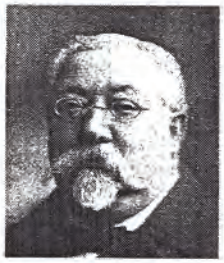
Bentley in La Crosse
partial (tentative) list

- Salzer House, 1634 King Street, 1912.
- Oyen Building, 507 Main Street, 1912.
- Chase House, 221 South 11th Street, 1912.
- Wohlhuter House, 223 South 11th Street, 1912.
- **Bartl House**, 1912.
- Felber House, 1408 King Street, 1912-13.
- Mueller House, 128 South 14th Street, 1915.



Bentley's plan: Detail, living room fireplace, bench (right of the fireplace) and into the dining area with china cabinet.

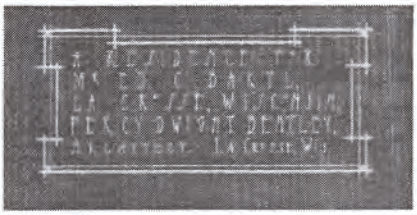
five children. In 1904, when the brewery was incorporated, Franz was president, son Joseph vice president, and son Frank secretary and treasurer. By 1907, when Franz was pictured, sturdy and bulldogish and burger-like in a photo used in several publications—apparently his favorite, in the new Memoirs of La Crosse County, son Frank was dead at 32, "a genial and popular man" who had been an alderman for 12 years. Son Edward was soon to be the brewery's vice president. The Bartls were prosperous business people, religious and fit-in.



Franz Bartl. Memoirs of La Crosse County.

Around 1910, as H. Allen Brooks dated it in his 1972 article about Bentley in The Prairie School Review, a date based on local assessment records, Bentley may have become involved with Edward and Flora Bartl (of whom we have no photos, but will share them when we do). What Bentley drew for them for their rectangular corner lot at 238 South 17th Street was an elaborated square. Brooks, aware from correspondence that Bentley observed Frank Lloyd Wright walking about "with his cape, cane and low crowned broad brim hat," quotes, from the same letter of August 24, 1965 (to one Robert Warn): "I became very much indoctrinated with both (Wright and Louis Sullivan), so when I opened my office in La Crosse it plainly showed in most of my work..." Besides the two masters, Bentley would have encountered others associated with progressive architecture. On the faculty at the Armour Institute in the Department of Architecture (or, The Chicago School of Architecture) during Bentley's times or just before were Hermann V. von Holst, there in 1905-06, and Thomas Tallmadge during Bentley's years. Tallmadge taught freehand drawing, history of architecture, history and composition of ornament, architectural design, interior deco-

Bentley's Bartl House

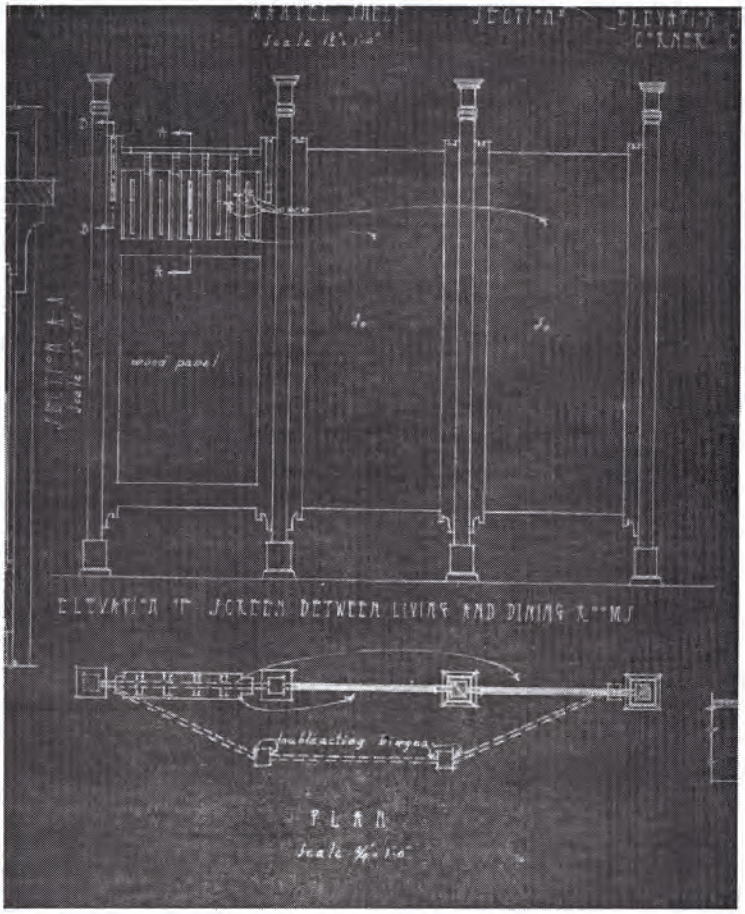


Bentley nameplate with pier corners.

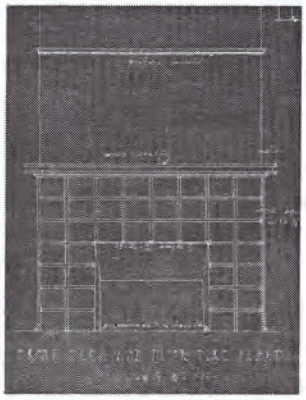
ration, and restoration from antique architecture. Lorado Taft, much acquainted with progressive architects, was a special lecturer on the history of sculpture. Morning technical classes were at the Armour Institute on the south side and afternoon classes in drawing and architecture at the Art Institute of Chicago.

The Bartl House is a box, but one affected by Bentley's knowing about Wright and, likely, as Brooks says, by Walter Burley Griffin. The shape is Wright's, as in the "fireproof house" in the Ladies' Home Journal in 1970, and the corner piers are Griffins. The house is good, small (30-by-35 feet plus porch) but good. From a small vestibule, you see the L-shaped living space beyond. Sleekness and light mark this space, the sleekness from the arched brick fireplace flat against the wall and book and china cases built into the piers, the light through the bands of art glass windows. When new, the house had a high bench extending across the part of the room near the entrance and a screen to separate living and dining areas. The stairs are in a tower set 45 degrees to the house wall and called "ingenious" by Brooks.

Dining area built-in. dma



Above, Bentley plan for screen to separate living and dining areas. The present owners continue to use the screen from time to time. Right, second-floor bedroom fireplace, not completed.



Dates for the house: Review of city records now kept at the La Crosse Public Library shows that 238 South 17th Street was assessed at $1,490 in 1912 and $3,500 in 1913; the attending reference librarian said that meant the house was finished in 1913. Water permit, also at the La Crosse library, show Bartl obtaining a permit to connect with city water mains on January 1, 1912, and filing a "plumber's return" after the house was finished on January 1, 1913. This suggests the house was designed in 1911, possibly 1910, and documents its completion in 1912. By then, Edward was the brewery vice president.

Edward and Flora Bartl owned and lived together in the house until 1946 when she died at 61. Her only survivor was Edward. He lived until 1957, when he died at 74 on a "Sunday afternoon after a long illness." The newspaper reported he once managed (presided in the 1920s and 30s) the Bartl Brewery, was an

Elk and a member of the St. Joseph Cathedral parish. The Bentley house had been his for 44 years. I checked one more place, the 50th anniversary program for the La Crosse Elks Lodge. Edward was an inactive member, as was his brother Joseph. I wonder about them, Edward and Flora. Their house was so good and so new in La Crosse in 1912. What were they about?

Lines and squares: Art-glass windows, second floor, facing street. dma

Sources: Memoirs of La Crosse County, Benjamin F. Bryant, editor, Western Historical Association, Madison, Wisconsin, 1907. Obituaries, Edward C. Bartl, February 4, 1957; Mrs. Edward C. Bartl, April 23, 1946, both La Crosse Tribune. "Percy Dwight Bentley at La Crosse," H. Allen Brooks, The Prairie School Review, 3rd quarter, 1972. The Prairie School, Brooks. Thanks to helpful La Crosse Public Library local history librarians, the archivist for Illinois Institute of Technology.

In Catholic cemetery in La Crosse. dma

Cass-King design revolution

The Cass-King neighborhood, named for two dominant east-west streets, is home to dozens of Prairie or progressive designs. The best block, for me, is the 200 block of South 17th Street, the one with Bentley's Bartl House at one corner and his Salzer House on the other. In between and across on the east side of 17th are, with one exception, complementary houses. Everyone appreciating progressive design will appreciate this block.

Bentley's Salzer House. dma photos.

Three of the houses are by Otto Merman (1890-1935), the Ott House, two Schwalbe houses from 1920-21. Born in La Crosse, Merman worked for Bentley from (c.) 1912-13, when he was in Minneapolis and Manitowoc, Wisconsin, and as Bentley's partner from (c.) 1918 for a few years until Bentley moved to Minneapolis and St. Paul. The Schwalbe houses are low-looking and horizontal with hipped roofs and wide overhangs; the Ott House is more vertical and in some debt to late George W. Maher designs. *More Merman later.*

Otto Merman's Ott House, receding masses as seen from second-floor of the Bartl House.

Otto Merman. Photo, La Crosse Area Research Center.

Another house in a supporting role in the 200 block is the Valier House (1922) architect unknown, though thought to be from Chicago. The Hulberg House (1912-13) next to the Bartl House, mixes Tudor and arts and crafts, architect unknown. And not supporting at all or visually a good ex-

ample of its own kind, is the Dahl House (1951-52), pseudo-colonial.

Sources. Cass and King Street Residential Historic District, National Register of Historic Places, Architectural Researchers, Inc., La Crosse, listed 1997. La Crosse Public Library and Area Research Center collections.

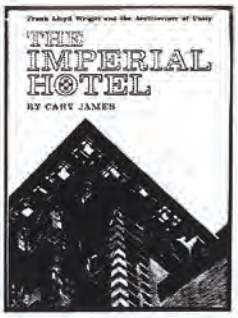
Merman's Wrightian Edwin and Marjorie Schwalbe House.

Merman's Maheresque Frank and Lucinda Schwalbe House.

Wright's neighborhood

What people are saying these days

The big story from Taliesin in Spring Green, Wisconsin, is the dissolution of Taliesin Architects, formed in 1960 after Frank Lloyd Wright's death in 1959, by Wright's widow Olgivanna and innovative William Wesley Peters. The dissolve came in June. The reason is financial; the Frank Lloyd Wright Foundation seeks on-going solvency, etc., said CEO James Goulka. Taliesin Architects had 12 licensed architects, down from 56 in 2000. Taliesin Architects was for-profit, the foundation a nonprofit. The 12 are free to open their own offices; they will continue to work with apprentices at the Frank Lloyd Wright School of Architecture; those who are members of the Taliesin Fellowship will continue to live at Spring Green or Taliesin West in Scottsdale, Arizona. Source: "Taliesin severs its architect business," Aaron Nathans, The Capital Times, Madison, Wisconsin, May 3, 2003.



Foster once visited Prairies

While a graduate student at Yale, the English architect Norman Foster traveled to the Midwest to see Wright's Prairie houses. His traveling companion was another English architect, Richard Rogers. Either could lead here; Foster does, though, because he was featured in a recent House Beautiful article. Source:

To next page

Old story from an architect's wife

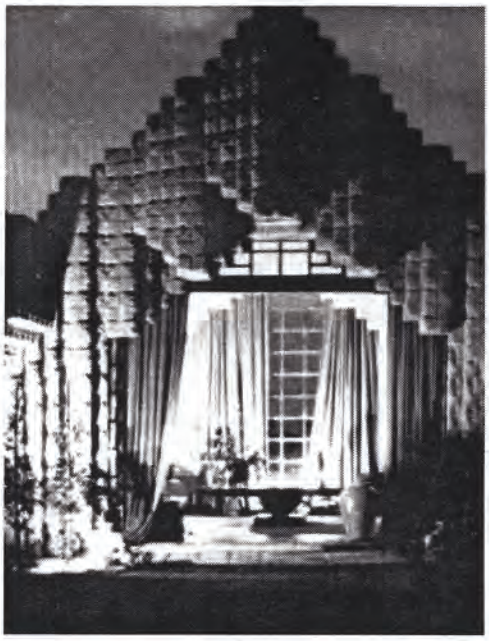
We were at the La Crosse (Wisconsin) Public Library on a Saturday afternoon a few weeks ago. We were in the collector's corner at a book sale in the basement. We found a copy, a first edition, of Cary James's The Imperial Hotel. We took it to the volunteer cashiers. Acquired by the library in 1969, the book was $6 and being removed from the collection. I said I'd been in the Imperial Hotel (1915-17, Wright) once, before it was demolished; I had breakfast there a few months before destruction began; I was in the Army and visiting Tokyo. One of the two women volunteers said she and her husband, an architect in La Crosse and then Winona, Minnesota, had gone to the Unitarian meeting house (1948-51, Wright) in 1952 or so to hear Wright speak. She remembered the meeting-house being in Middleton, Wisconsin, which adjoins Madison to the west; it's in Shorewood Hills, and seems to be in much larger Madison, since there is no urban boundary between the two. She recalled sitting on Wright's wood benches, and these being connected by chains, and one chain near her husband coming undone, falling to the floor and making a noise. Wright looked over at them. He looked annoyed, she told me. What did Wright say, I asked? She couldn't remember his words. She thought him pompous. Attitude, she recalled, not words. The woman added that Wright arrived wearing a cape. Fifty years later, that's what she had. Such stories of inconsequence linger in Wisconsin.

Books—Lloyd Wright, David Adler

"Man of Steel," Thomas C. Cooper, HB, June 2003.

Obscure

The house where an alleged and dead murderer of the Black Dahlia, Elizabeth Short, lived was designed by Frank Lloyd Wright's son, Frank Lloyd Wright Jr., or Lloyd Wright. The accused Dr. George Hodel bought the Sowden House in 1945. His son Steve, the accuser in his new book *Black Dahlia Avenger* remembers the house looking "like a Hollywood set out of a 1930s five-reeler: foreign and exotic." Dr. Hodel liked fine design. In 1940, Rudolph Schindler remodeled another house for him and designed new furniture.



Lloyd Wright's Sowden House, Los Angeles, 1926. UC-Santa Barbara, 1971.

Lloyd Wright. Photo, John Engstead.

Source: Lloyd Wright, Architect, 20th Century Architecture in an Organic Exhibition, David Gebhard, University of California, 1971—a quirky book by the ubiquitous Gebhard (1927-96); includes a Lloyd Wright project and building list.

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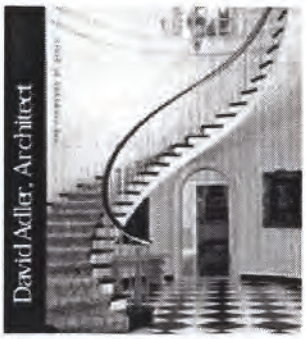


Double bests

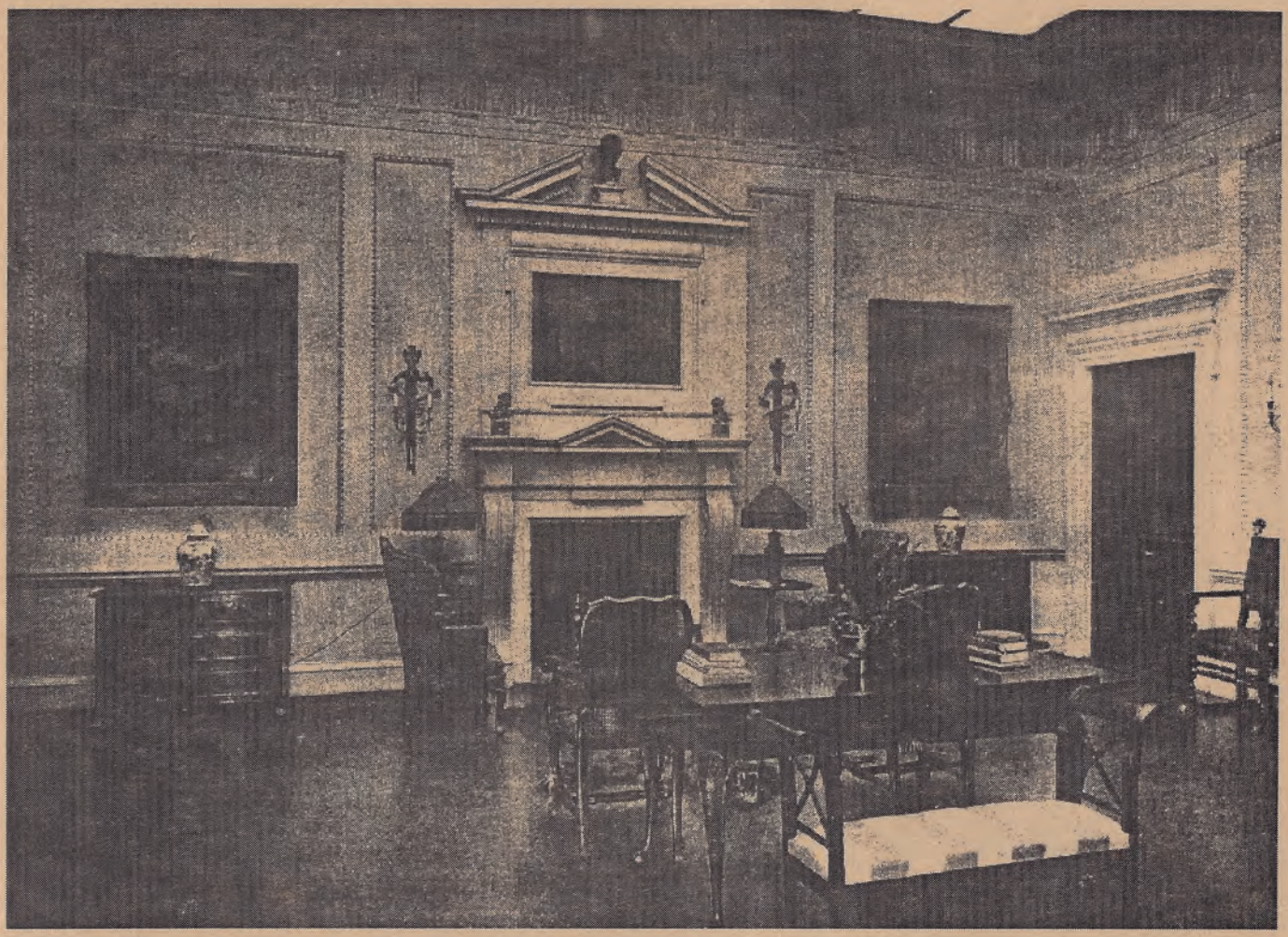
Noted here under our "popular" category, David Adler (1882-1949) seems well-served, likely overserved, by the book that accompanied the recent Adler exhibition at the Art Institute of Chicago. The two best parts of the book, *David Adler, Architect, the Elements of Style*, are the Richard Guy Wilson chapter and examples of Adler's subversion of classical design. In a page-turning piece, Wilson, the TV (watch A&E) commentator and architectural historian, gets most of what we want about the Milwaukee-born architect. He carefully shows Adler's personal life and style. We learn that Adler's wife Katherine wrote a novel, The Crystal Icicle (1930), about "a frigid wife whose husband carries on an affair with another woman." Wilson ponders, briefly, whether the novel "reflected tensions within her own marriage." The other best: repeated references to Adler's use of contemporary materials and a stripped classicism here and there. The cover photo, stairway in the Mrs. Kersey Coates Reed House (1931-32), Lake Forest, Illinois, shows the glass balusters and chrome fittings Adler substituted in adapting the work of John Russell Pope in the Burden House, Jericho, Long Island, New York. The book's editor is Martha Thorne.

David Adler. UC-Santa Barbara.

More reading

For Adler's early years and his partnership with the short-lived Henry C. Dangler (1881-1917), look at "Domestic Architecture of Henry Corwith Dangler, Architect," in The Architectural Forum for April, 1922. Their 1917 houses (shown) on Lakeview Avenue in Chicago were praised as "an excellent example of... modern American tendency in house design."

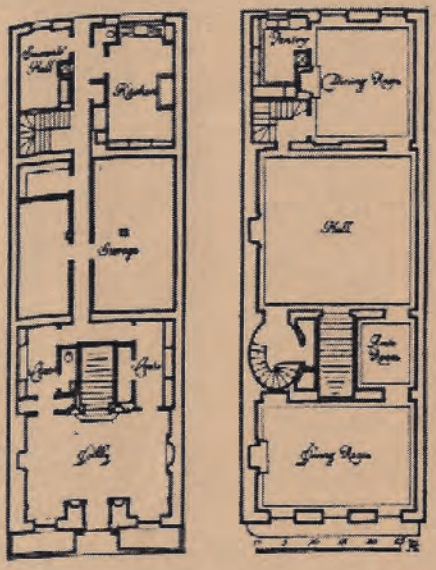
Ryerson detail. AF.

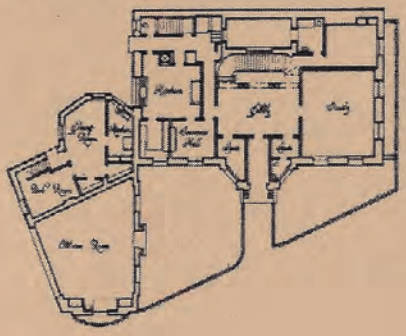


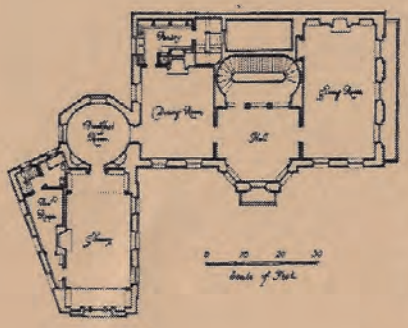
Main hall, Abram Poole House, Chicago. Architectural Forum, April 1922.

Other directions

In their April 1922 article on Adler and Dangler, titled "Domestic Architecture of Henry Corwith Dangler, Architect," The Architectural Forum swiped nastily at progressives—Wright, Maher, Griffin, for unnamed examples. Here it is: "Architects of today are perhaps not producing buildings that may be labeled distinctly American, in fact this was one of the qualities that might be applied to the work at the end of the last century, but it surely had little else to commend it." AF had little problem with hodgepodgery, calling Adler's Poole hall Adam and Georgian and furnished "from early French, Italian and English periods..." AF found "working in a number of styles" to have "the spirit and charm of the definite period, yet... free from pedantic copying."





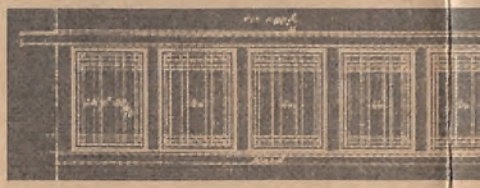


Adler floorplans.
Above, Abram Poole House. Hall shown in photo is at center of plan at right.
Left, Mrs. Arthur Ryerson House. Note tiny servant's room behind the library; two windows, though, and full bathroom.

A limestone fragment of Maher's Wausau (WI) library (b. 1905-07, d. 1994) on the original terrace of Frank Lloyd Wright's Manson House (1939-41), Wausau, half-owned by the Prairie editor-publisher. dma

La Crosse, Wisconsin, at mid-20th century. Cass-King neighborhood is at midway left. Postcard, La Crosse News Agency. Below card, band of Bartl House windows from Percy Dwight Bentley's drawings. Below windows, Bentley ad from 1912.

Zona Gale



Front cover art: Lawrence Buck's drawing of George Maher's Rudolph House (1907), Highland Park, Illinois. From portfolio autographed by Maher to his father-in-law, the artist Alden Brooks.